

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (withdrawn) A cutting guide for preparing vertebral incisions, comprising:

a) a planar forward end having a curved edge and a straight edge, wherein said curved edge is shaped to approximate the shape of the anterior portion of the vertebral surfaces of adjacent vertebrae and said straight edge is shaped to guide a surgical blade making an incision; and

b) a handle extending outward from said straight edge of said planar forward end.

Claim 2. (withdrawn) The cutting guide in accordance with claim 1 wherein said handle is placed for lateral insertion into a disk space.

Claim 3. (withdrawn) The cutting guide in accordance with claim 1 wherein said handle is placed for anterior insertion into a disk space.

Claim 4. (withdrawn) A distractor for separating and stabilizing adjacent vertebrae comprising:

a frame comprising;

a) a right vertical rail and a left vertical rail wherein said right vertical rail and said left vertical rail each comprise an upper leg having external screw threads and a lower leg without external screw threads and wherein each of said upper legs and each of said lower legs have an aperture near the end portion;

b) a top cross member connecting said upper legs; and

c) a bottom cross member connecting said lower legs.

Claim 5. (withdrawn) A cutting block for preparing vertebral surfaces for prosthesis implant comprising:

a) a plate having an upper horizontal cutting slot and a lower horizontal cutting slot;

b) a flange on a right side of said plate; and

c) a flange on a left side of said plate.

Claim 6. (withdrawn) The cutting block in accordance with claim 5 wherein said plate of a) further comprises a hole at each corner.

Claim 7. (withdrawn) The cutting block in accordance with claim 5 further comprising a retractor affixed along the side of either said flange of b) or said flange of c).

Claim 8. (withdrawn) The cutting block in accordance with claim 6 further comprising a retractor affixed along the side of either said flange of b) or said flange of c).

Claim 9. (withdrawn) An artificial implant for spinal disk replacement comprising;

a) a superior body for attachment to a superior vertebral surface;

b) an inferior body for attachment to an inferior vertebral surface; and

c) a fixed, constrained bearing between said superior body and said inferior body wherein a surface of said fixed, constrained bearing is complementary to a surface of said superior body and a surface of said inferior body.

Claim 10. (withdrawn) The artificial implant in accordance with claim 9 wherein said superior body, said inferior body and said fixed, constrained bearing are composed of a bio-inert material selected from the group consisting of surgical stainless steel, ceramics, polymers, metals, polyethylene and combinations thereof.

Claim 11. (withdrawn) An artificial implant for spinal disk replacement comprising;

a) a superior body for attachment to a superior vertebral surface;

b) an inferior body for attachment to an inferior vertebral surface; and

c) a fixed, semi-constrained bearing between said superior body and said inferior body wherein a surface of said fixed, semi-constrained bearing is complementary to a surface of said superior body and a surface of said inferior body.

Claim 12. (withdrawn) The artificial implant in accordance with claim 11 wherein said superior body, said inferior body and said fixed, semi-constrained bearing are composed of a bio-inert material selected from the group consisting of surgical stainless steel, ceramics, polymers, metals, polyethylene and combinations thereof.

Claim 13. (withdrawn) An artificial implant for spinal disk replacement comprising;

a) a superior body for attachment to a superior vertebral surface;

b) an inferior body for attachment to an inferior vertebral surface; and

c) a mobile bearing between said superior body and said inferior body wherein a surface of said mobile bearing is

complementary to a surface of said superior body and a surface of said inferior body.

Claim 14. (withdrawn) The artificial implant in accordance with claim 13 wherein said superior body, said inferior body and said mobile bearing are composed of a bio-inert material selected from the group consisting of surgical stainless steel, ceramics, polymers, metals, polyethylene and combinations thereof.

Claim 15. (withdrawn) An artificial implant system for the repair of vertebral facets comprising:

- a) a first implant shaped as a cap for fitting over and attaching to an inferior vertebral facet; and
- b) a second implant shaped as a button for attachment to a superior vertebral facet.

Claim 16. (withdrawn) The artificial implant system in accordance with claim 15 wherein said first implant is composed of polished metal and said second implant is composed of polyethylene or polyethylene backed by metal.

Claim 17. (withdrawn) A surgical kit for disk arthroplasty comprising instruments and an artificial implant wherein said

instruments are a sizing instrument, a distractor and a cutting block and said artificial implant has a fixed, constrained bearing.

Claim 18. (withdrawn) A surgical kit for disk arthroplasty comprising instruments and an artificial implant wherein said instruments are a sizing instrument, a distractor and a cutting block and said artificial implant has a fixed, semi-constrained bearing.

Claim 19. (currently amended) A surgical kit for disk arthroplasty comprising instruments and an artificial implant wherein said instruments are a sizing instrument, a distractor and a cutting block, [[and]] said artificial implant has a mobile bearing having a superior body for attachment to a superior vertebral surface and an inferior body for attachment to an inferior vertebral surface, said inferior body having a peripheral wall with a peripheral ring formed thereon, a mobile bearing capable of being placed between said superior and said inferior body wherein a surface of said mobile bearing is complementary to a surface of said superior body and a surface of said inferior body, said mobile bearing surface includes a circumferential groove constructed and arranged to receive said peripheral ring to secure said bearing to said inferior body.

Claim 20. (withdrawn) A surgical kit for vertebral facet arthroplasty comprising instruments, a first artificial implant and a second artificial implant wherein said instruments are a sizing instrument, a distractor and a cutting block and said first artificial implant is shaped like a cap for fitting over and attaching to an inferior vertebral facet and said second artificial implant is shaped as a button for attaching to a superior vertebral facet.

Claim 21. (withdrawn) A method for preparing a vertebral site for receiving an artificial implant comprising the steps of:

a) measuring the vertebral space with a sizing instrument;

b) making a first incision in a superior vertebrae along a straight edge of said sizing instrument;

c) making a second incision in an inferior vertebrae along a straight edge of said sizing instrument;

d) stabilizing said superior vertebrae and said inferior vertebrae by mounting a distractor between said superior vertebrae and said inferior vertebrae;

e) expanding said distractor to approximate a natural disk space between said superior vertebrae and said inferior vertebrae;

f) inserting a cutting block into said distractor and preparing the inferior surface of said superior vertebrae and the superior surface of said inferior vertebrae by excising damaged disk material; and

g) removing said cutting block and said distractor whereby said vertebral site is prepared to receive said artificial implant.

Claim 22. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 21 further comprising a step of inserting an artificial implant into a prepared vertebral site wherein said artificial implant has a fixed bearing or a mobile bearing.

Claim 23. (withdrawn) The method in accordance with claim 22 wherein said fixed bearing is constrained or semi-constrained.